

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) A polymer mixture including components (i) a hydrogel-forming polymer capable of absorbing aqueous fluids and prepared by polymerizing an olefinically unsaturated carboxylic acid or a derivative thereof, and (ii) a copolymer of a C₂-C₈ olefin or styrene with an anhydride in a molar ratio between the C₂-C₈ olefin or styrene and the anhydride in a range from 3:1 to 1:3.

13. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (i) is granular or fibrous, and component (ii) is independently granular or fibrous, and optionally component (ii) is additionally fibrous or granular.

14. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (ii) is sprayed onto component (i) as a polymer or as a monomer mixture with subsequent polymerization.

15. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (i) comprises a polyacrylate.

16. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (ii) is granular.

17. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (ii) is unhydrolyzed.

18. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein the anhydride component of component (ii) is maleic anhydride and the olefinic or styrene component is selected from one or more of isobutylene, vinyl acetate, ethylene, and styrene.

19. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (i) is a grafted product.

20. (Previously presented) The polymer mixture of claim 19 wherein component (i) is grafted onto carboxymethylcellulose.

21. (Currently amended) The polymer mixture of claim ± 12 wherein component (i) is present in a fraction in a range from 99.7% by weight to 85% by weight, and component (ii) is present in a fraction in a range from 0.3% by weight to 15% by weight.

22. (Currently amended) A hygiene article comprising a polymer mixture of claim ± 12.

23. (Currently amended) A method of ~~an~~ absorbing an aqueous fluid and reducing odor formation comprising contacting the fluid with a polymer mixture of claim ± 12.